

Press Release

For Immediate Release



CONTACT: Donna LaMond, Friends Executive Director, dlamond@westutx.gov; Mark Prescott, Friends Chair, mark.prescott@prescottlegal.com

Hilton of the Americas – February 10, 2018 - Over 600 West University Place neighbors and friends joined together for a *Night in Old Havana*. The 27th annual Park Lovers' Ball raised well over \$400,000! The decor was chaired by Stacey Christ to fulfill the *Paradise in the Park* vision of Co-chairs, Jennifer Blum and Jennifer Swallen. A red and white 1957 Nash Metropolitan Coupe and candy apple red 1957 Ford Thunderbird were on loan to the event by West U residents. Guests were also treated to the talents of world-renowned artist, Franco Mondini-Ruiz, who commissioned portraits during the gala. The cigar bar, sponsored by Evan Capital/Daniel Blum continued the theme of the evening. A Cuban trio entertained guests before dinner.

The Live Auction excitement started with an Astros package and personal visit from a World Series Winner and West U Resident. Travel Artistry Africa and resident, Tamysn Fricker, donated a luxury Africa Photo Safari. RLD Imports of Du Bar Rum donated a week stay at Casa de Campo in The Dominican Republic for guest to continue the Caribbean flare. Former Miss USA 2008, Crystle Stewart, led the bidding frenzy finale!

The Park Lovers' Ball Chairs were Jennifer and Daniel Blum and Jennifer and William Swallen. They credit the success of "Paradise in the Park" to their team of volunteers. The Auction Chairs were Kelly Beth Hapgood and Natalie Crossley. Underwriting and sponsorship chairs were Elizabeth Love and Wendy Cloonan.

The evening concluded with everyone on the dance floor, as Password kept the party going until midnight. Guests were met at valet by Tila's Taco Truck for a late night bite sponsored by Elite Care Rice Village.

Jennifer and Daniel Blum and Jennifer and William Swallen, along with Friends Executive Director, Donna LaMond, would like to thank all who attended and who assisted in making Park Lovers' Ball 2018 a fabulous community event. The evening's sponsors and underwriters included Transwestern, Bracewell LLP, Greenwood King Properties, Conway MacKenzie, TransCanada, CenterPoint Energy, Cara and Chad Michael, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Mandy Rochelle Designs, Jane and Harry Pefanis.

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The Friends of West University Place Parks Fund, Inc. is a volunteer based 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to raising funds for the renovation, expansion, development and improvement of parks and green spaces in the neighborhood parks of the City of West University Place. The board is appointed by City Council and raises money through foundation grants, citizens' bequests, memorials, special events and various other programs and events including partnerships with local businesses.